

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9011

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SPOP ZA  
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL  
PROBLEMS -- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 107370, (B) STATE 200399

1. REGRET DELAY IN RESPONDING TO REFTEL A. DEPARTMENT IS  
AWARE THAT AMBASSADOR LOW HAS RARELY BEEN IN LUSAKA SINCE  
THE END OF APRIL. THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE BASED UPON THE  
EXPERIENCE OF THE CHARGE.

2. IN DISCUSSING THE NEED FOR ZAMBIA TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY  
WITH FOOD PROBLEMS, WE HAVE FOUND THAT WE ARE PUSHING AGAINST  
AN OPEN DOOR. ZAMBIANS AT ALL LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE  
AWARE OF THE NEED TO DEVELOP ZAMBIA'S AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL.  
THIS REALIZATION STEMS DIRECTLY FROM THE DECLINE IN THE PRICE  
OF COPPER SINCE 1975 WHICH HAS LEFT ZAMBIA WITH LITTLE IN  
THE WAY OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO MEET ITS FOOD IMPORT BILL.  
THIS DECLINE HAS STIMULATED THE GRZ'S DETERMINATION TO EXPAND  
AGRICULTURE IN ZAMBIA. EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD HAVE, UNDER-  
STANDABLY, NOT AS YET PROCUCED THE RESULTS DESIRED. ZAMBIA'S  
FOOD IMPORTS CONTINUE TO RUN AT ABOUT \$36.5 MILLION PER YEAR.  
REAL PROGRESS WILL ONLY BE REALIZED AFTER A MASSIVE INVEST-  
MENT OF MEN AND MONEY OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS. THERE HAVE BEEN,  
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HOWEVER, SOME INDICATIONS OF HOW ZAMBIA MAY SUCCEED. WHEAT  
IMPORTS ARE A MAJOR BURDEN ON ZAMBIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE.  
WHEAT PRODUCTION ENCOURAGED BY THE GRZ IS NOW A REALITY IN  
ZAMBIA AND THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO INCREASING PRODUC-  
TION. VEGETABLE OIL, NOW ALMOST 100 PERCENT IMPORTED, CAN  
AND SHOULD BE PRODUCED LOCALLY. THIS IS RECOGNIZED AND EFFORTS  
ARE BEING MADE TO STIMULATE THE GROWTH OF SUNFLOWER AND SOY

BEANS. AGAIN, THESE PROJECTS ARE IN AN EARLY STAGE BUT THEY APPEAR PROMISING. MAIZE PRODUCTION IS ANOTHER AREA WHERE ZAMBIA HAS MADE PROGRESS. ONCE DEPENDENT UPON THE IMPORTATION OF CORN, ZAMBIA NOW PRODUCES ENOUGH CORN TO MEET ITS OWN NEEDS AND TO EXPORT. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR SUGAR PRODUCTION. CLEARLY THERE IS MUCH MORE THAT CAN BE DONE AND WE BELIEVE, BASED UPON OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH ZAMBIANS FROM THE PRESIDENT THROUGH HIS MINISTERS, THAT FURTHER STEPS WILL BE MADE TO MAKE ZAMBIA SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOOD PRODUCTION. THEY NOT ONLY ACCEPT BUT WELCOME THE REQUIREMENT THAT COUNTERPART FUNDS GENERATED BY PL-480 TITLE I BE USED TO PROMOTE ZAMBIAN AGRICULTURE. THERE IS THE RISK, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD THE PRICE OF COPPER SHARPLY INCREASE THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBIA WILL BE DIVERTED FROM ITS EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURE.

3. ZAMBIA IS A HUGE COUNTRY WITH A POPULATION OF LESS THAN SIX MILLION. MOST ZAMBIANS DO NOT PERCEIVE A PROBLEM WITH POPULATION PRESSURE. TO THE CONTRARY, THEY SEE A NEED FOR A LARGER POPULATION TO MAKE USE OF THE LAND WHICH IS AVAILABLE. HOWEVER THE RECESSION WHICH HAS HIT ZAMBIA SINCE 1974/75 HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON THE FACT THAT THE COUNTRY DOES NOT HAVE RESOURCES READILY AVAILABLE TO FEED AND CARE FOR THE POPULATION IN THE CITIES. FUNDS ONCE AVAILABLE FROM THE SALE OF COPPER ARE NO LONGER THERE TO PROVIDE SCHOOLS, HEALTH SERVICES AND SUBSIDIZED FOOD. THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS AT LEAST IN SOME QUARTERS CAUSED OFFICIALS TO THINK IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TERMS OF POPULATION LIMITATION. THIS CHANGING SENTIMENT HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS. IN YEARS PAST THE ONLY MENTION MADE OF POPULATION PLANNING WAS IN A NEGATIVE CONTEXT. OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS HOWEVER THE PRESS AND TELEVISION HAVE PUBLICIZED INFORMATION ABOUT CLINICS WORKING IN BIRTH CONTROL. THEY ALSO HAVE GIVEN FULL COVERAGE TO CONTROVERSIES BETWEEN THOSE WHO RESIST ALL FAMILY PLANNING AND THOSE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO THIS END. THESE DEVELOPMENTS WE REGARD AS EXTREMELY HEALTHY AND BELIEVE THEY REFLECT A REAL CHANGE IN ZAMBIA'S APPROACH TO FAMILY PLANNING. WE SHOULD NOTE THAT PUBLICIZING FAMILY PLANNING IN ZAMBIA HAS TAKEN A DEGREE OF COURAGE SINCE THE REIGNING PHILOSOPHY OF THE ONE PARTY STATE CONDEMNS THIS APPROACH.

4. IN OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH ZAMBIANS, WE HAVE FOUND THE SAME DUALITY OF APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF FAMILY PLANNING. PARTY MILITANTS TEND TO CONDEMN THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF FAMILY PLANNING. HOWEVER, WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO CONCRETE CASES OF SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS, THEY SHOW AN OPEN MIND TO THE NEED FOR SUCH A PROGRAM. OTHERS, LESS BEHOLDEN TO PARTY DOCTRINE, ACCEPT WITHOUT RESERVATION THE NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING.

5. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR DIALOGUE WITH ZAMBIANS ON  
POPULATION GROWTH AND FOOD PRODUCTION AND BELIEVE THIS WILL  
BE HELPFUL IN NUDGING THEM DOWN ROADS THEY ARE ALREADY  
INCLINED TO TAKE.  
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